

PEOPLE-A-L
Collins

Collins Family Sets Sail for Two Years

A newly restored *Zora* helps fulfill their dream

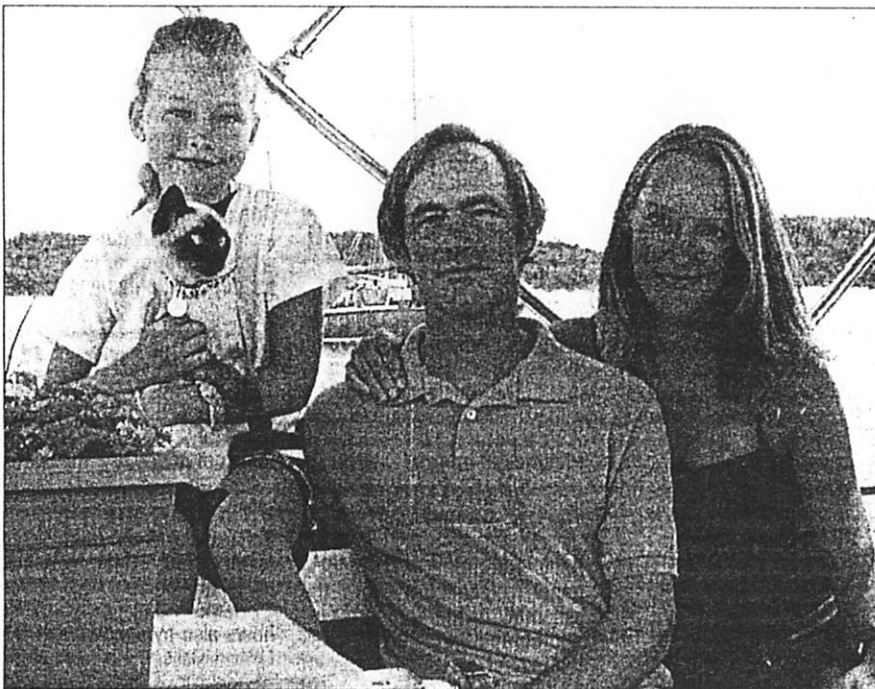
By JESSICA LANIEWSKI

The opportunity to sail the world does not come often for many families, but Neil, Stacey and Olivia Collins were enthusiastic by the chance to pilot their boat, *Zora*, around exotic ports of call for two years.

The journey started when Neil and Stacey bought a Marina 39 that had been sitting on land for two years and renovated it. *Zora*, which the Collins' bought in May 2002, was in need of extensive repairs. The Collins had to battle water damage in the main salon, the interior varnish was in want of refurbishing and mildew and cat droppings had left the boat with a foul odor. Despite this, the Collinses liked the layout of *Zora*, and finding it to be a sound boat, they put the work and time into repairing the 1981 New Hampshire manufactured vessel. With the help of friends and strangers alike,



Olivia and Daisy catch dinner off of their boat.



Olivia, Neil and Stacey Collins, along with their cat Daisy aboard the *Zora*.

the Collins' were able to restore *Zora* to sailing condition after a two year restoration that was sometimes trying.

After Stacey was diagnosed with cancer in December of 2001, the family was looking for a way to relax and found the sea to be a comfort. The Collins decided to pursue their dream and spend an unstressed period of time sailing and setting their own course with their 7-year-old daughter, Olivia. Neil said of the trip that it "also felt good to be living so connected to the rhythms of nature and the sea, and to be so self-sufficient." The family left Maine in mid July of 2004 and returned this past June after two years of visiting various ports and durations of stay.

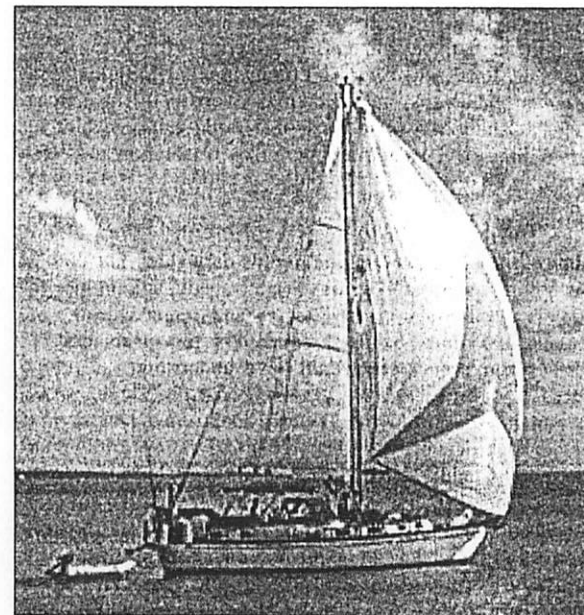
After the renovations were completed on *Zora*, the Collins family sailed from Portland, Maine down the east coast of the United States and southward. They eventually stopped at locations such as Puerto Rico, Cartagena, Columbia and the San Blas Islands in Panama. Among their favorite sights where the Aves Islands off the coast of Venezuela for its incredible reef system and Tikal which boasts ancient Mayan ruins in Guatemala. The family "didn't plan much in advance" and stayed at different locations based on whether they found them interesting or if *Zora* needed repair. Out on the open water the family worked as a team to sail and keep *Zora* in working condi-

tion and relied on each other for food and company. Neil says that "it was really wonderful for the three of us to be together all the time. We're definitely closer as a result of this trip"

The Collins' two year sailing adventure showed them the beauty and simplicity of working toward basic needs for themselves and their boat. Along the way they were amazed by the foreign lands and water they encountered. "It was also wonderful to be surrounded by so much sheer beauty all the time" said Neil.

The Collinses are looking forward to planning another long journey in a few years. As for *Zora*, the boat has received a spring cleaning and is available for charter in Maine for the summer.

Neil Collins is the son of June Flavell Collins of Depot Street.



Zora, in full sail, shortly out of port.

Duxbury Clipper